



2728 Mall Drive, Ste 200
Eau Claire, WI 54701
Phone: (715) 830-2273
Fax: (715) 835-4658
www.RegisCatholicSchools.com

Regis High School Regis Middle School Immaculate Conception Elementary St. James Elementary St. Mary's Elementary Genesis & Regis Child Development

August 23, 2021

Dear Regis Catholic Schools Families and Staff,

I am excited to be open another year offering in-person education five days a week during a pandemic. Many of you have reached out to me on both sides as it relates to masking filled with extreme emotion and valid concerns about the decision you feel I should make for Regis. I am sharing this letter because it is impossible for me to respond to every single person individually. This is extremely difficult for me and the leadership team. Being asked to create a policy/mandate and tell you your child(ren) must wear a mask when at school seems to be beyond the expertise of many educators.

In the Eau Claire City-County Health Department's COVID-19 Toolkit for Schools, dated August 11, 2021, it states the following:

Indoors: Mask use is recommended for all teachers, staff, and students in schools, regardless of vaccination status.

In looking at the language, you will clearly see this is a recommendation, not a mandate. Last year, the State of Wisconsin issued a mask mandate, which later turned into a local mask mandate. And Regis followed both of those mandates. If state or local mandates are implemented, Regis Catholic Schools will follow them again. At this time, no mandate is in place. It is up to you to decide how you will conduct yourself. It is also strongly recommended for all who can to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

I have passed along, and will continue to pass along, important information to help you make decisions for your family. At this time masking is a parental decision we trust you to make for your family. Regis Catholic Schools will continue cleaning efforts, ventilation, distancing, and frequent handwashing, as outlined in our 2021-22 PreK-12 COVID-19 Information & Policies document.

It is important to remember that there are many real factors that make our schools different from larger schools. Based on our enrollment numbers and classroom sizes, we are able to distance children on a regular basis more easily in hallways and classrooms, which also contributed to this decision to keep masking optional at this time. Our school leaders, both paid and volunteer, discussed and considered many factors when creating our COVID-19 policies for the coming school year. We have, and will continue to monitor our local COVID-19 data on a daily basis and are prepared to make policy changes quickly, if necessary.

Regis Catholic Schools has complied and will continue to with any local, state, or Diocesan mandate, if one is to be issued. At this time, there is no official mandate in place and the Regis leadership unanimously agreed masking should be a parental decision. Our decision stands that all people, vaccinated or not, know and understand the recommendations and will mask as they see fit. You and your child(ren) are all welcome to mask at any time.

We need you to understand that when/if a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a classroom, we will likely need to close the entire classroom for a time period. We will resume in-person learning as soon as possible, but just like last year, sometimes we will ask you to quarantine and get tested before returning.

As a community, we have learned a tremendous amount of information about COVID-19 over the past year, but there is still much that is unknown. Despite the uncertainty that surrounds this pandemic, there are many things I am confident in; our faith, curriculum, teacher pedagogy, professional development, staffing, building projects/needs, budgets, and strategic planning. I feel qualified to inspire the leaders I work with and develop relationships. These are all things to do with K-12 education for children for which I feel comfortable and qualified. I hope you will understand me putting my efforts towards those areas in an attempt to maintain the excellent level of education Regis Catholic Schools is known for. We are all here to educate children.

Please pray for all of us at Regis Catholic Schools, as I see the stress taking its toll on many of our staff. I hope we start this school year by encouraging each other, lifting each-other up and finding ways to help others succeed. Many blessings to you and your family as you prepare to begin another year of learning and deepening faith.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly K. Mechelke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "K".

Kelly K. Mechelke, Ph.D.
President, Regis Catholic Schools

***Balance and scales belong to the Lord: all the weights
used with them are His concern. Proverbs 16:11***

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

Regis Catholic Schools is dedicated to educating students of all faiths in a Catholic, Christ-centered environment. We are united by Our Core Values of *Living Faith, Accepting Responsibility, Promoting Teamwork, Achieving Excellence, and Inspiring Leadership.*